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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/729,960	12/09/2003	Masami Tomita	246440US2	2716

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EXAMINER

NOTE, JANIS L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1756

DATE MAILED: 04/11/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Part of Paper No./Mail Date 042006

Art Unit: 1756

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-13, drawn to an image forming process, classified in class 430, subclass 124.
- II. Claims 14-29, drawn to (a) an image forming apparatus and (b) a process cartridge, classified in class 399, subclasses 159 and 111, respectively.

2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Invention I and Invention II(a) are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another and materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)).

In this case, the process can be practiced by hand. The toner image on a substrate can be formed by the following steps:

(1) vigorously rubbing the surface of a photoconductor with a soft material, such as a cotton or silk handkerchief; (2) light irradiating the charged photoconductor by placing a transparency comprising a light opaque pattern on the charged photoconductor and irradiating light through the transparency with a hand-held

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light source to form an electrostatic latent image; (3) manually pouring the toner onto a developing roller while manually passing a blade over the roller to regulate the toner flow on the developing roller, manually positioning the developing roller over the electrostatic latent image, and manually rotating the developing roller, over the electrostatic latent image, while applying a vibration bias voltage to the roller by attaching a power supply to the developing roller, to develop the latent electrostatic image; (4) transferring the toner image on the photoconductor to a receiving member by placing the receiving medium, such as a piece of paper, on the toner image on the photoconductor and hand pressing the surface of the receiving medium to the photoconductor with a block, and then manually separating the receiving member with the transferred toner image from the photoconductor; (5) manually applying a releasing oil to the surface of a belt heated by a heating element by using a roller or brush; and (6) fixing the toner image on the receiving medium by passing the toner image-containing receiving medium through a nip formed by a pressing roller and the oil coated-heated belt by hand.

Invention I and Invention II(b) are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be

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practiced by another and materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)).

In this case, the process as claimed can be practiced by another and materially different apparatus, such as an apparatus that comprises a photoconductor, a charging device, an image-wise exposure device, a developing unit, and a transfer device, wherein each of the components are separately integrated members of the apparatus. In the examiner's example, the photoconductor and the developing unit in the image forming apparatus are not packaged as a process cartridge as recited in Invention II(b).

Because these inventions are independent or distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, and have acquired a separate status in the art in view of their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

3. Applicants are advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species or invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

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The election of an invention or species may be made with or without traverse. To reserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse.

Should applicants traverse on the ground that the inventions or species are not patentably distinct, applicants should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the inventions or species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C.103(a) of the other invention.

4. Applicants are reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

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5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Janis L. Dote whose telephone number is (571) 272-1382. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's acting supervisor, Mr. Nam Nguyen, can be reached on (571) 272-1342. The central fax phone number is (571) 273-8300.

Any inquiry regarding papers not received regarding this communication or earlier communications should be directed to Supervisory Application Examiner Ms. Claudia Sullivan, whose telephone number is (571) 272-1052.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JLD

Apr. 3, 2006

Janis L. Dote
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GROUP 1500
1700